

148. (amended) A method of extrusion processing a mixture of thermoplastic materials, said process comprising:

introducing a mixture of thermoplastic polymers consisting of PVDF and PMMA into an extruder barrel, wherein the mixture of thermoplastic materials is amorphous;

heating the mixture of thermoplastic materials to provide a molten blend thereof;

contacting the molten blend of thermoplastic materials with a blowing agent; and

subjecting the blend to conditions sufficient to create a thermodynamic instability in the blend to foam the blend, wherein the foamed blend has a percent crystallinity lower than the first thermoplastic polymer;

wherein the foamed material formed by said method has a plurality of distinct void spaces formed therein having an average size ranging from about 0.1 to about 50 microns.

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

At the time of the Action, Claims 1-15, 23-38, 46 and 65-158 were pending. Claims 73-122 and 149-158 are allowed. Claims 68, 72 and 142 are objected to. Claims 145 and 148 stand rejected under Section 112, first paragraph; these claims have been amended above as suggested by the Examiner, thus rendering this rejection moot. Claims 1-15, 23 and 65-68 stand rejected as duplicates of Claims 123-142; these claims have been deleted above. Of the remaining claims, Claims 69-71, 123-141 and 143-149 stand rejected under Section 103(a). These rejections are addressed hereinbelow.

II. The Section 103(a) Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 4-15, 23, 65, 66, 123, 124, 126-140 and 143-145 stand rejected under Section 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,922,493 to Humphrey et al. (Humphrey). Claims 24-28, 30-38 46, 69, 70 and 146-148 stand rejected under Section 103(a) over Humphrey in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,692,381 to Pecsok. Claims 3 and 123 stand rejected under Section 103(a) over Humphrey in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,879,505 to Boutillier et al (Boutillier). Claim 29 stands rejected under Section 103(a) over Humphrey in view of Pecsok and Boutillier. Claims 67, 71 and 141 stand rejected under Section 103(a) over Humphrey in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,284,412 to Minakata et al. (Minakata).